Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue #8 **Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC** **15 July 2010**

Pest Alert!!!

See the section below under soybean called 'Pest Alert: Bean Plataspid' for updated information about an invasive species now on soybeans in our state.

Pest Patrol Hotline

There is a toll-free hotline for quick updates on insect problems. I will update the short message weekly for at least as long as the newsletter runs. Simply call the free number **(877) 285-8525** and select the messages you would like to hear (I am #7 on the listing of specialists). The hotline is sponsored by Syngenta Crop Science.

News from Above the Lakes

I was reminded by various folks that the Annual Crops Field Day at the Pee Dee Research and Education Center will be held on 10 August, so be sure to look for details concerning the program for that event. Another individual traveling down from the upstate and checking fields as he came down said that the gradient of the current moth flight was very clear, with the pressure increasing as he worked south.

News from Below the Lakes

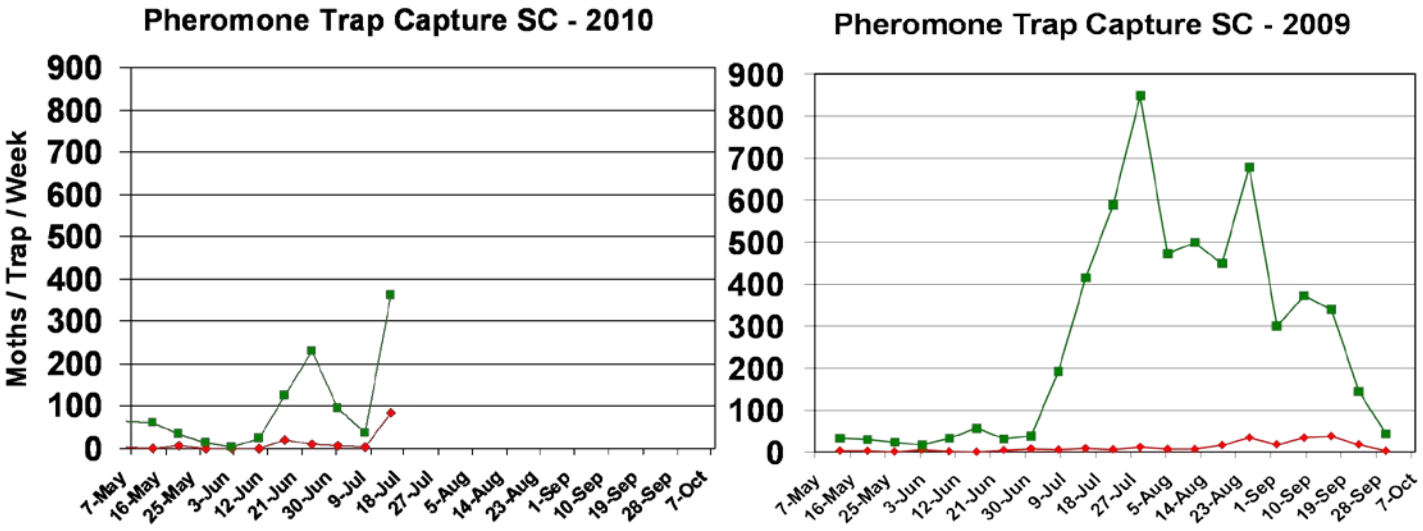
Tommy Walker, county agent covering Hampton, Allendale, and Jasper Counties, reported this week that he is seeing signs of fungus on aphids in cotton and crashing populations and that bollworm moths and eggs are everywhere. Tommy also noted that fields are getting treated for stink bugs, so bollworms surviving dual-Bt-gene cotton are getting controlled by those applications. Several local consultants reported similar observations regarding building pressure from bollworm and stink bugs and treatments for those pests. The next week or two will be extremely important for keeping an eye (or two) on these pests.

Cotton Situation

As of 12 July 2010, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office had our progress at 69% of the crop as squaring, a little ahead of where we were last year at 67% and the 5-yr average of 63%. About 18% of the crop has set bolls, also ahead of 8% for last year and 10% for the 5-yr average. Conditions were described as 9% excellent, 48% good, 34% fair, 9% poor, and 0% very poor for the crop. Overall moisture levels in the state were described as 20% very short, 41% short, 35% adequate, and 4% surplus. Widespread rains since this report have improved the moisture situation in most areas. Many areas received more rain than they wanted.

Bollworm & Tobacco Budworm

Captures of bollworm (BW) and tobacco budworm (TBW) moths in pheromone traps at EREC this season and last season are presented. The scales on the charts are the same to illustrate where we are compared with last year. **Here we go!** Our trap numbers were high this past week, and I continue to expect that our flight will be a big one this year. Our egg counts are up this a tremendous amount this week – we are running close to 100 eggs/100 plants in many locations. Because the bollworm continues to be an important pest of cotton and soybean, we will continue to monitor the progress of this pest.



Cotton Insect Control Guide

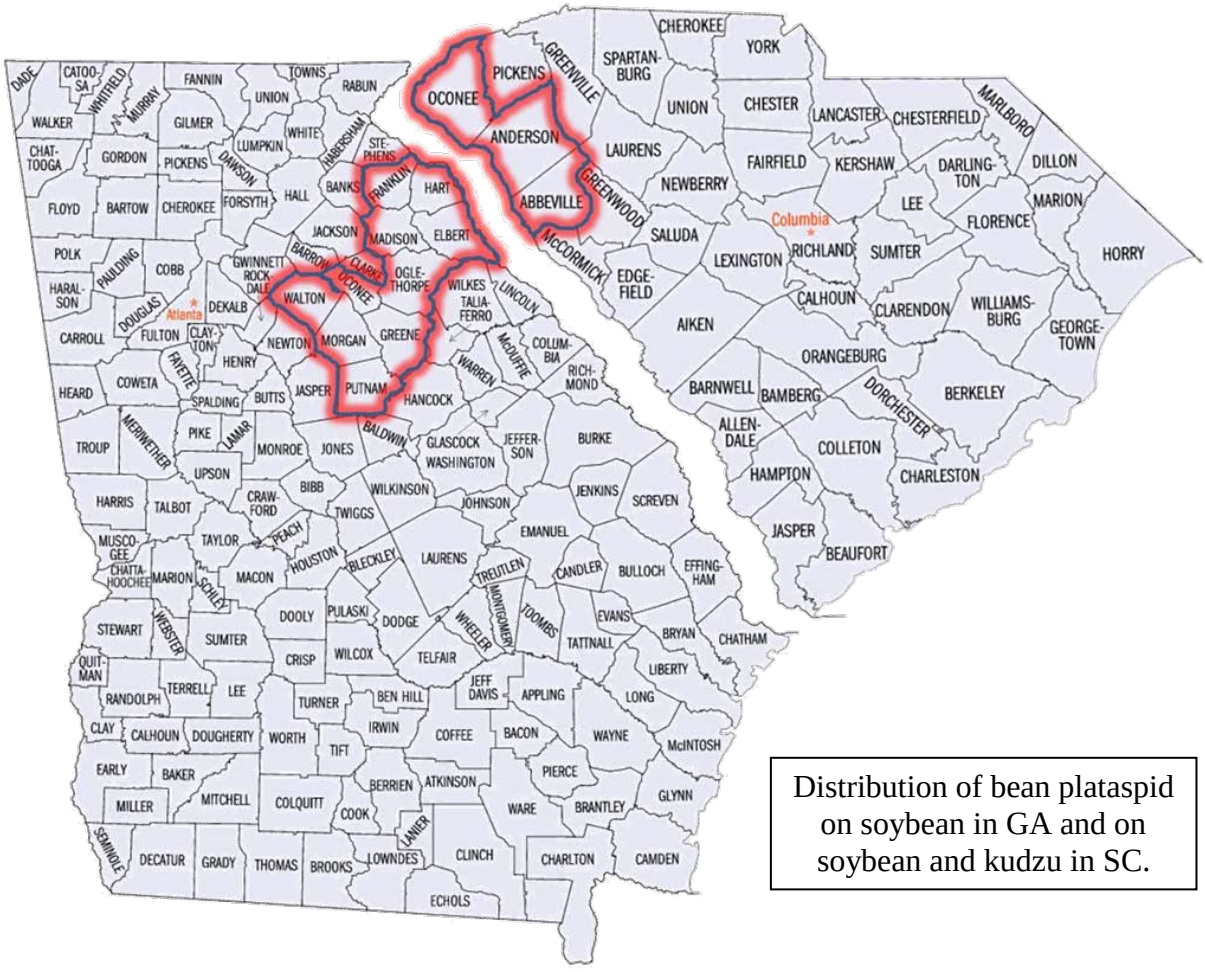
Clemson University Publication IC97 (Cotton Insect Management) has been revised for 2010 and is available free from your local county office. It is also available online at:
http://www.clemson.edu/psapublishing/PAGES/ENTOM/IC97.pdf

Soybean Situation

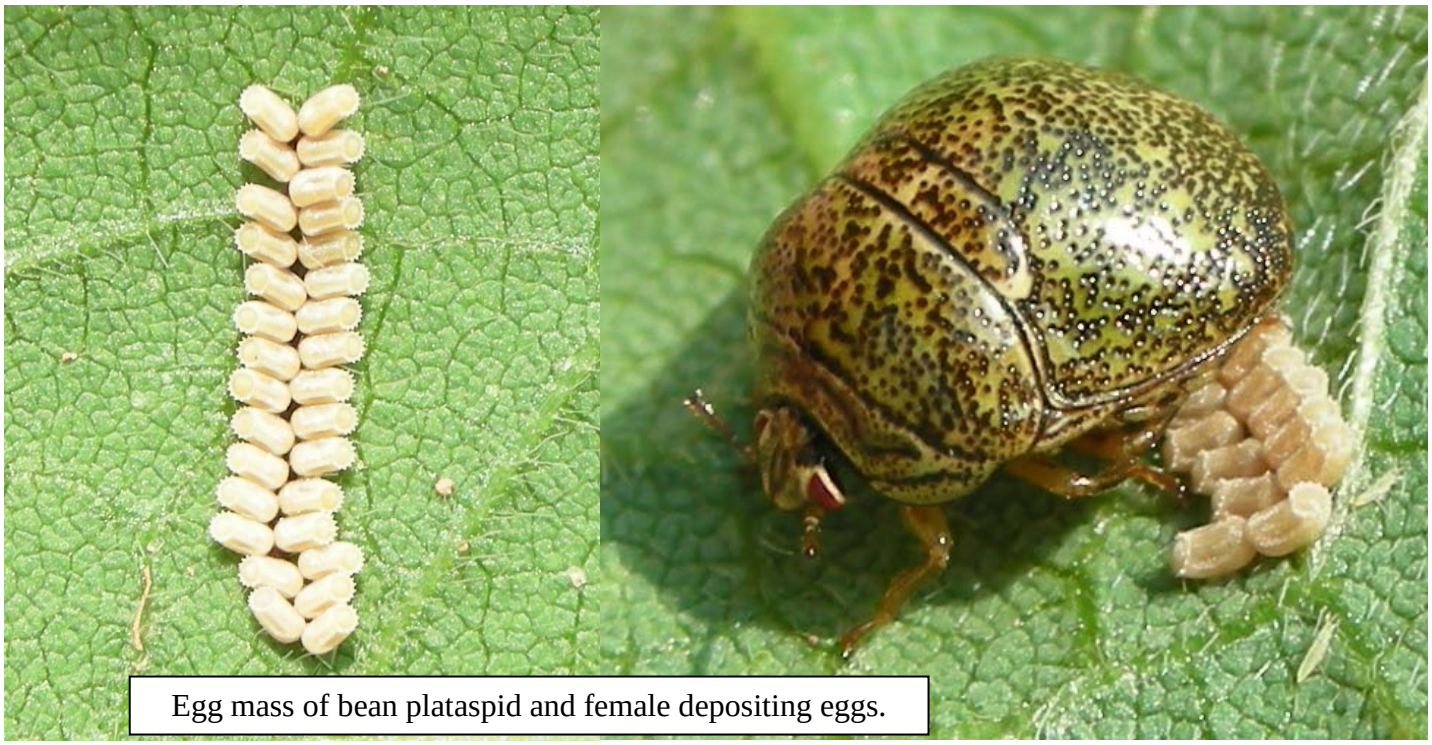
As of 12 July 2010, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office had our progress at about 98% of soybeans emerged, about equal to where we were last year at 97% and the 5-yr average of 95%. About 18% of soybeans have bloomed, ahead of last year's 6% and the 5-yr average of 11%. About 7% of the crop has set pods, ahead of where we were last year at 1% and the 5-yr average of 2%. Conditions were described as 3% excellent, 41% good, 37% fair, 16% poor, and 3% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

Pest Alert: Bean Plataspid!

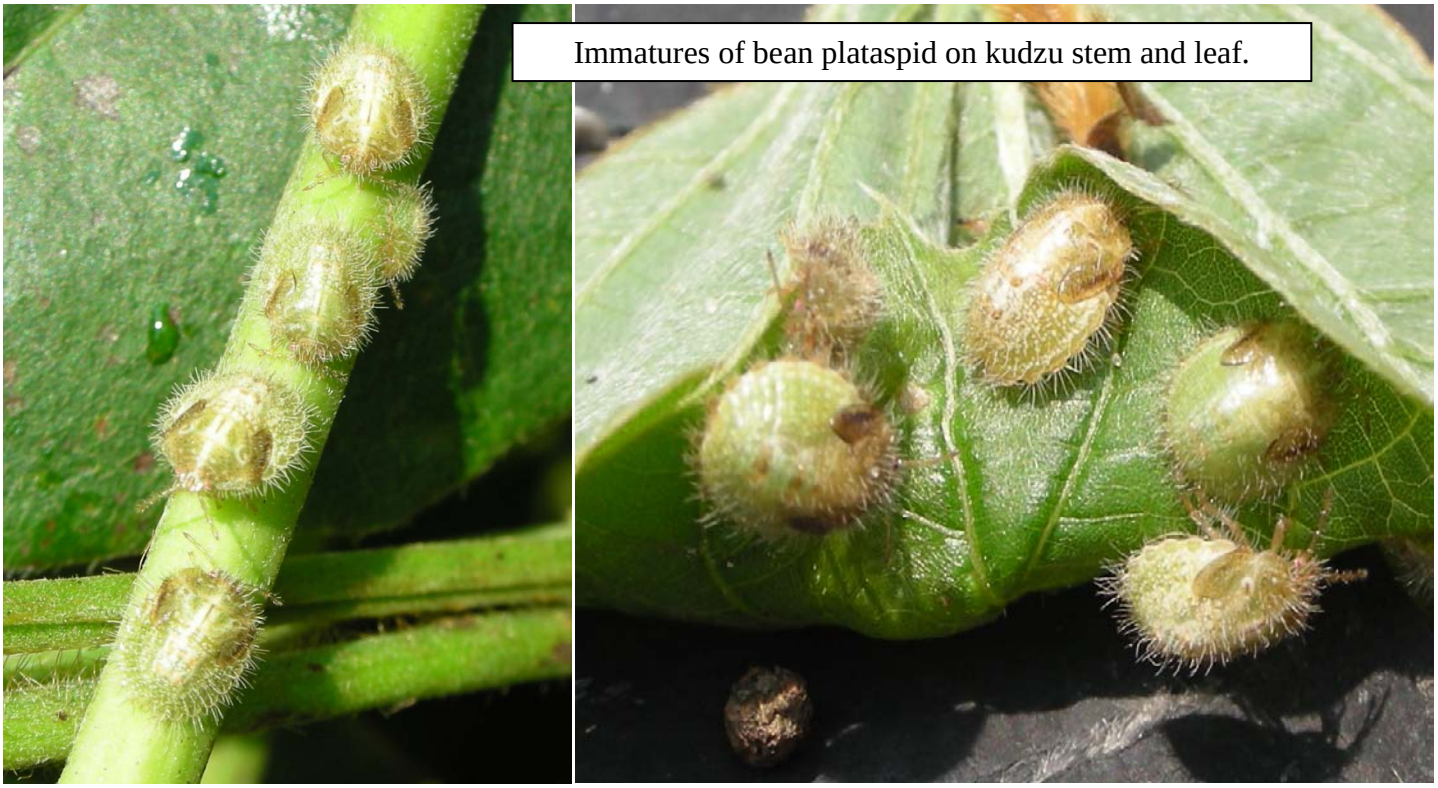
I reported last week and a couple of weeks ago (Newsletters #5 & 7) about an invasive species from China and India that has been found in Georgia and South Carolina on kudzu and soybeans. The insect is closely related to stink bugs and is called the bean plataspid, *Megacopta cribraria*. As I mentioned previously, the "epicenter" seems to be around the Athens, GA, area, but the insects are quickly spreading to other areas. ***The bean plataspid has been confirmed on soybeans and kudzu in Oconee, Anderson, and Abbeville Counties in SC (see map below), but it will feed on legumes in general, so it could be on other hosts, and it might be present but yet to be detected in other counties***. We need your help in documenting where this pest is and is not. If you are out and about and want to check patches of kudzu or soybean fields, please take GPS coordinates and note information about the presence or absence of these bugs in your area. Please email that information to me. Be very careful when leaving an infested area because these insects can be transported very easily on your clothing and get into your vehicle. We want to minimize its spread – let's not help these insects by unknowingly taking them to non-infested areas.



Distribution of bean plataspid on soybean in GA and on soybean and kudzu in SC.

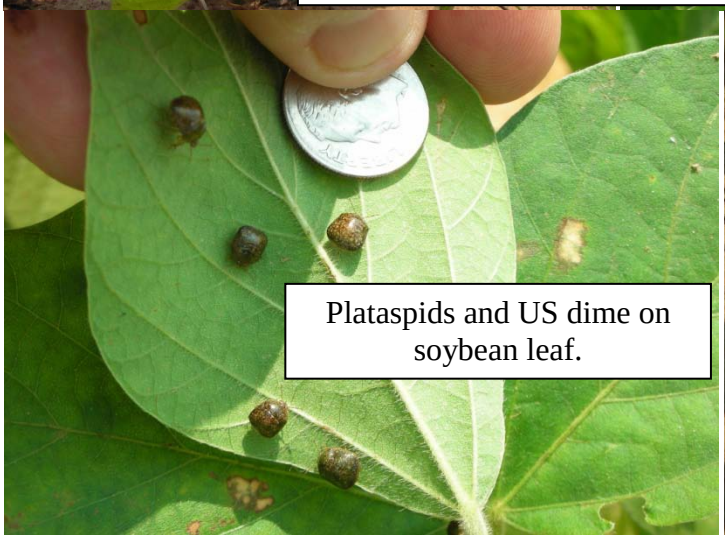


Egg mass of bean plataspid and female depositing eggs.

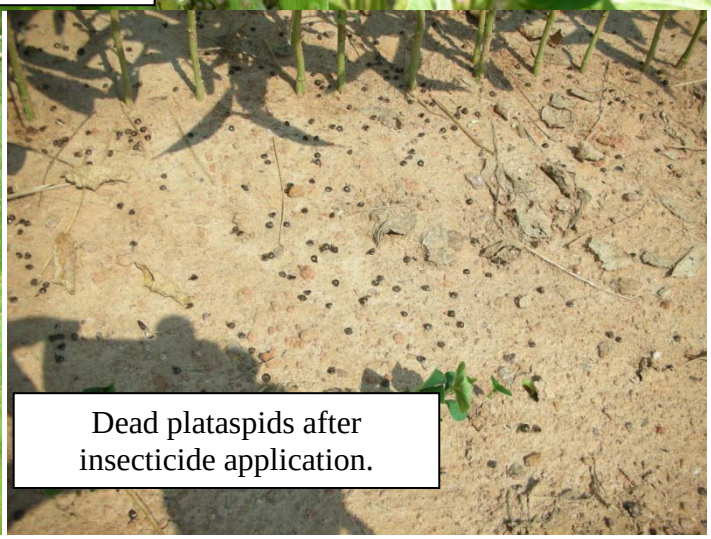


Immatures of bean plataspid on kudzu stem and leaf.

Adult bean plataspids on soybean and volunteer corn plant.



Plataspids and US dime on soybean leaf.



Dead plataspids after insecticide application.

The photos above show the bean plataspid on soybean and a volunteer corn plant in a soybean field. The bugs seem to like resting on anything that is taller than the canopy when the afternoon sun is bearing down (102 degrees when I took the corn photo above). Another observation confirmed this when we observed adult plataspids resting under the leaves of a sweetgum tree by the hundreds all the way to the top near the edge of the soybean field. Insecticide efficacy numbers out of Georgia indicate that the pyrethroids and organophosphates offer good control but that the pyrethroids seem to have more residual control. However, we still do not know for sure what economic losses might be incurred from this pest. They are described in the foreign literature as stem and leaf feeders, and that fits so far with our observations, but we have not seen them on beans with developed pods yet. So, although we have learned a great deal about this pest to date, we have much to learn about this invasive species. I will keep providing updates in the newsletter.

Soybean Insect Control Guide

Clemson University Publication SL1 (Soybean Insect Management) has been revised for 2010 and is available free from your local county office. It is also available online at:
http://www.clemson.edu/psapublishing/PAGES/AGRO/SL1.pdf

Pest Management Handbook - 2010

Insect control recommendations are also available online in the 2010 Pest Management Handbook at:
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/rowcrops/pest/index.html

Golf Tip of the Week

Just kidding and checking to see if anyone reads this to the end.

Need More Information?

Log on to the following web pages to view important cotton management recommendations, data, and historical cotton insect newsletters:
http://www.clemson.edu/public/rec/edisto/research/cotton.html
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/rowcrops/cotton/index.html

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.
Associate Professor – Entomologist

Visit our website at:
http://www.clemson.edu